

Emily Dickinson, poems (M 361-365)

“I like a look of agony,” “I’ve seen a Dying Eye,” “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died,” “Because I could not stop for Death”

• **Applicable poetry terms:** (look up in *Bedford* Glossary)

allusion	alliteration	simile	allegory	
rhyme	connotation/denotation	double meaning/ <i>double entendre</i>		voice/persona
controlling image, etc. (“conceit”)	diction	sonnet		
enjambment	end-stop	scansion	meter	feet caesura
explication/exposition	assonance	consonance		free verse
hyperbole	imagery	motif/leitmotif	meiosis	

• **Voice/persona:**

In at least one of these poems, Dickinson *cannot* be speaking for herself (if we read literally) – what persona does she adopt?

What does either Dickinson or the persona sound like she’s trying to do in these poems?

• **Dialogue/diction:**

Does the voice-persona try to make a particular point or argument in each poem?

Does the voice/persona rely on readers’ knowledge of material outside the poem (prior facts to help the poem make sense?)

Does the voice/persona repeat words, phrases, or constructions to help make the argument or point in each poem?

What part does *sound* itself play in these poems?

What would you say is each poem’s *tone*? On what evidence do you base this conclusion?

• **Figures of speech:**

Do the voices/personae use *simile*, *metaphor*, or other devices in these poems? To what effect?

• **Meter/rhythm/sound:**

What do these poems *sound* like—have you heard this meter before elsewhere?

How does Dickinson’s use of long dashes work alongside her caesura and enjambment?

What role does *anaphora* or repetition play in her poems?

What kind of *sound* does each voice/persona create, and how? (alliteration, assonance, consonance, sibilance, etc.)

• **Imagery/ Symbols/references/motifs/etc:**

Apart from the obvious—i.e. death—what other kinds of imagery do the voices/personae use here?

Do any elements in the narrative work as controlling images? (*controlling image/conceit*)

• **Themes (what the poem is about):**